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ACTION FA-05
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FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7207
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY *Z. Monin* DATE 5/5/80

PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, UY

SUBJ: HUMAN RIGHTS: CASE OF WASHINGTON DE VARGAS SACONE
REF: (A) MONTEVIDEO 2431 (B) MONTEVIDEO 1847

1. EMBASSY INVOLVEMENT IN DE VARGAS SACONE CASE HAS BEEN EXTENSIVE SINCE SEPTEMBER 1977. AMBASSADOR RAISED WITH FONMIN ROVIRA EARLY IN THAT MONTH. IN OCTOBER WE INCLUDED HIM ON A LIST SUBMITTED TO OUR INFORMAL JOINT HEADQUARTERS (ESMACO) CONTACT. IN JANUARY, 1978, THE DE VARGAS CASE WAS BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMED FORCES POLITICAL COMMISSION. CASE BECAME MORE ACTIVE IN EARLY MAY WHEN WE LEARNED [REDACTED] THAT PRISONER WAS IN THE HOSPITAL SUFFERING FROM PHYSICAL ABUSE OR AS THE RESULT OF A SUICIDE ATTEMPT. WE MADE OVERTURES THEN TO KEY MILITARY LEADERS AND TO MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE. AMBASSADOR RAISED CASE AGAIN WITH FONMIN AND CHARGE BROUGHT IT TO ATTENTION OF NEWLY APPOINTED FONOFF CHIEF OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS, GIAMPUNO. WORD RECEIVED BACK FROM GOU SOURCES WAS THAT DE VARGAS SACONE WAS IN THE HOSPITAL BUT THAT HIS CONDITION WAS SATISFACTORY. NO EXPLANATION WAS GIVEN AS TO THE REASONS FOR HIS HOSPITALIZATION.

2. WHEN THE TIME CAME FOR HIS RELEASE AT THE END OF

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HIS SENTENCE ON MAY 21, IT BECAME CLEAR THAT CERTAIN ELEMENTS IN THE GOU WERE NOT READY TO RELEASE DE VARGAS ON GROUNDS THAT NEW EVIDENCE HAD BEEN DISCOVERED IMPLICATING HIM IN THE 1970-71 KILLING OF TWO SOLDIERS IS WEAK.

EXCISE

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